

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2009/06/india-fails-to-approve-visas-for-uscirf.html>

Reflecting the complicated politics involved in both countries, the Indian government has failed to approve visas for members of the **U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom** who were supposed to visit the country beginning June 12. Today's India Times reports that Indian officials denied that the failure to issue visas was related to statements made earlier this month by Hindu leader, Shankaracharya Jayendra Sarawati. (See prior posting.) However the Indian government does feel that a high profile visit, approved by the Indian government, would be inappropriate at this time. USCIRF has criticized violence against religious minorities in India. Meanwhile, the Obama administration is apparently not eager for the **USCIRF** trip to take place either. Most of the **USCIRF** commissioners and staff are holdover appointees from the Bush administration, and the timing of the trip overlapped with a planned visit to India by US Undersecretary of State William Burns who will be laying the groundwork for a visit to India by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.